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brought out, their heads cut off and enclosed in an iron cage which was exposed in the city for all to see. So, in 1819, died Sher Jangh Khan, the last of the Muslim rulers, together with his nephew Shams Khan, and Raja Dhyan Singh, a Dogra and a Hindu, became the ruler.

Their hatred is not so much against the first Dogra ruler of Poonch as of his brother, the Maharaja Gulab Singh, who was paramount to him, and they tell how in 1845 when "some of the men of Poonch dared a small revolt against him, he came down in person and suppressed it, and then had certain of the prisoners flayed alive before him. And when the executioner hesitated before he did this awful thing, the Maharaja accused him of being chicken-hearted and asked him if he had been asked to perform upon his father or brothe."

After reminding you that Didda, the most powerful Queen ever to rule over Kashmir, was a Princess of the House of Poonch, the schoolboys, having by this time completely forgotten their feelings against the Hindus and Sikhs go on with, "And you must of course be knowing that but for the interference of the Viceroy Lord Reading there would now be a Poonch Maharaja, because the priest-ridden old Maharaja Pratab Singh would have selected as his heir his adopted son Rajkumar Jagat Dev Singh, who was only fourteen years when he took him, who was second son of Sir Baldiv Singh the Raja of Poonch, who was second cousin to Pratab Singh and great-grandson of Gulab Singh's brother Dhyan Singh". This rumour arose after a rather unsavoury blackmail case in London in which Raja Hari Singh, the Maharaja's nephew and closest relation, was involved as the victim. Then further to prove the case for Poonch, they go on, "Even at the funeral of the Maharaja Pratab Singh it was Jagat Dev Singh who performed the obsequies required of a son and heir". Jagat Dev Singh died in 1940.

It was rather surprising to find how well kept the city was, boasting electric light, telephones and water channelled from nearby streams, all in the midst of comparative nothingness; the quite excellent roads which intersect it frequently running for five or six miles outside, the gardens gay with flowers. Still more pleasant to discover is the most excellent rest house

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—the Raja's guest house. To sit on the lawns before this and watch the glorious changing of colours in the surrounding hills brought about by the setting sun, is a fitting finish to a good day's sport or a long trek, as in the air fresh and clear you listen to stories told of the day's play with rod and gun, for there is good fishing in the river and plenty of game on the slopes above.

Poonch is renowned for its bear hunts, its Rajas have always been the keenest of sportsmen, and seldom has a season passed in which there have not been at least two bear drives in each of which "honks", as they are called, forty or fifty bears have been shot, for they abound in the dense forest slopes round about. The shikaris of Kashmir insist that great numbers of black bears migrate in the autumn to Poonch where there is little if any snowfall during the winter.

Whereas the red bears of Gilgit spend the winter's hibernation in a cave, the black bears of Kashmir, where the mountain slopes are covered with firs, pines and other great trees, find a hollow tree trunk for those months of rest.

Unlike the red bear, which shikaris declare to be a more or less harmless creature only killing what he needs for his own food, the clumsy, rapacious black bear does an enormous amount of damage, killing off hundreds of young pine trees by ripping away the bark to get at the gum which exudes and of which he is as passionately fond as of honey, or by eating or trampling down fields of Indian corn—another favourite of his—destroying in a night sufficient to provide a poor peasant family for the whole season.

When the corn is ripening the farmers do their best to protect the crop from bears which invade it at that time; it is on the Indian corn that they fatten for the winter. Fires are lighted, the smoke drifting across the field; bears dislike this since they cannot get the sniff of a hunter through the smoke. In the middle of the field a small platform called a *machan* is built and on this sits a guard, his job being to scare the bears away when they come—they always feed at night. He blows horns, throws stones, or by pulling a long string rattles a can with stones in it, the can being tied to a tree or pole which may be a hundred yards away from him. But he is usually too